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the following speech and observations were made by Generalinspekteur Wilhelm Zaisser at a meeting of school leaders, deputies and P/K officials of the HVA convened at Döbeln, 25 January 1950.

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Several months have gone by since our last meeting, and this time has again seen many changes. We are living today in a time in which the political and economic developments occur in a tempo which cannot be measured in years and months, but which must be measured in days and weeks. With regard to the months of January, December, and November it can be said without exaggeration that our young German Democratic Republic has begun to walk, that it really in this short time has passed the suckling stage or has progressed beyond its childhood and now is well on the road to life.

But realize what has made this tempo possible. This is not fully and completely comprehended. It was realized from premises which had not existed before. Among these conditions were, in addition to the political hypotheses, the anti-fascist reeducation of the German people and the economic-political situation. And what has been accomplished in this field is apparently still not completely clear to most of our responsible collaborators.

When you think back two or three years - especially to the winter of 46/47 - there existed, in addition to the totally destroyed economy and only the smallest perceivable sign of reconstruction, a depressive mood among the broad masses. More production was demanded. The people answered: first, more food. They were physically and morally exhausted. Really, don't try to protest, because it was so. The worker had in reality too little to eat to maintain his strength. The party and trade unions succeeded in breaching this apparently impenetrable wall by developing the initiative of

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the individual and by expanding the activist movement. These people accomplished more without having any more to eat. Today this is nearly all history, for today everything has become better. But try always to realize just what an accomplishment lies behind this fact, what the working class has done both physically and morally, and what it still performs over and beyond the norm. The working class, the single class, which with the farmers, has made possible this shining political development. When we comprehend this, when we see it clearly in all its consequences, then the basic mood of each individual vis à vis these material gains which were won in this manner must call forth a feeling of awe and respect which expresses itself thus: Turn each penny over once, twice, three times before spending it, for each penny is literally covered with the sweat of an exhausted people.

The foremost conclusion is: practice continual economy in relationship to all material values. But what do we appear to have done? Many have not yet understood the meaning of the entire political development of the last two years.

Certainly we are the first to see to it that the school becomes the focal point of our students' life, that the club room serves cultural purposes and is not just a place of relaxation. But when a school leader also demands separate club rooms for officers, non-coms and men, in addition to two million other projects, then I am no longer in agreement. Is such a leader living on the moon, or what is the matter? Or when an additional 30 to 40,000 DM is demanded over the available estimate of 180,000 DM for furnishing an institution, again I can no longer be in agreement. Those who commission such projects stand as strangers to our form of life, they fail to understand concrete situations. Those are depressing signs. Responsibility rests solely with the school leader, although the P/K deputy bears, perhaps, a still greater responsibility. He should be the soul of the whole unit.

When we created this organization in July, we were forced very nearly to create our schools from nothing. We lacked qualified co-workers, who were found only after difficulty. As unsatisfied as we still are, our schools are now at a stage where they can bear examination. All of you have performed a tremendous amount of work, I know, and our P/K instructors have accomplished a great deal. And in spite of this our political work in the various Objekte remains poor - above all, the party and youth work - especially at the higher levels.

It is horrible, for example, that after the Christmas leaves, the curve of desertions rose abruptly. Not, however, in the sense that the people did not come back from their leaves; they returned and then deserted. And no one submitted complaints about this behaviour. Consequently, the examples of these young people registered great effect with regard to behaviour of others. That they deserted later, however, proves that our political work is bad. And still more alarming is the fact that many of the deserters were not the politically untutored, but were FDJ functionaries, members of the P/K Apparat, Kommissare and Oberkommissare, and men whose parents were Communists before Hitler and are now SED functionaries. What is the matter when people coming from such backgrounds desert? The reason is to be found in our poor political work. I have attempted to examine these reasons carefully. It is a problem which extends beyond the entire framework of the Hauptverwaltung.

Our line of agitation against remilitarization in West Germany is a false one. We must explain to the youth exactly what is militarization and what is not. Our P/K Apparat has also failed in this task. The youth is inclined to pacifistic leanings, characterized by statements that they wish never again to have to handle weapons, but only tools. In this feeling they are being supported by the FDJ-Vorstand. They even say that they do not want any part of this Tito affair. I have already discussed this matter with Walter Ulbricht; he will do everything he can to change this attitude.

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Also in the use of P/K material the situation is not what we should like it to be. For example, a large amount of P/K material has already been published, much of it of good quality. But how is it put to use? Our political functionary faces a terribly difficult task, a task which is more difficult than that facing the camp commanders. On one side, he must take care of all the problems and difficulties besetting our young people, and on the other side, he must maintain authority. In this situation it is particularly hard to find the right approach. But once such an appropriate line is found, successful political work can be accomplished. In addition to the political themes as presented in the teaching plan, questions concerning the HO's and HO prices, and the postponement of leave dates are brought up by the students. The individual student cannot answer these questions by himself, and we must answer them for him.

One observation for our political instructors. We have instituted shops which were intended to supply the everyday needs of our personnel. In some of the Objekte, however, huge warehouses have been established where up to ten employees are needed, and these must be paid from the earnings of the shop. All of these occurrences run counter to our instructions. The shops could operate without profit, the goods should be offered to our students at a cheaper price. The student should feel that he is being cared for. The P/K leaders in the various Objekte should point out these practices and immediately stop them.

And there are still other points: A great amount of work has been accomplished which had to be done with improvised means. And when it is examined, it can be seen that it was well done. But when a school leader turns to Berlin and complains that coats, shoes, sport outfits and ovens were not delivered on time, - the last because the school leader forgot that the Objekte also have to be heated - it points to behaviour which does not willingly accept responsibility. He must have the courage to take the blame and not try to place it on the shoulders of the Berlin officials.

In this connection you can, perhaps, understand what difficulties are entailed in obtaining 40,000 pairs of shoes. They are not readily available, and, in fact, must first be manufactured. Vis a vis the population this is such favoritism that we would be highly embarrassed if we had to order still more.

While I'm on this subject there are a few other points I should like to make. Not only that here and there officers try to foist the blame for their errors on Berlin, but in some instances they even say that they were acting on orders of their colleagues. We cannot countenance this practice. You cannot avoid your responsibilities. In this connection I should like to pass on some advice, which, on the basis of my 30 years experience, I know to be right. You can never pretend to have received orders which were never issued.

And one last point. In the construction of our schools, we have reached the stage at which the general basis of the schools is fairly well founded. But as the process of construction continues, the question of specialization comes more and more to the fore. We are People's Police Schools and People's Police Training Units, and it is gradually being spread about that we may be doing more than this. This won't come over night, but one day we will put first things first, perhaps by saying that we have changed our rank insignia or our uniform, etc.

We are not yet in a position to establish real specialists schools, i.e., specializing in all kinds of weapons. We will surely come, however, to specialist's schools, perhaps not until 1960, but, by then, perhaps, it won't be necessary. Now, at any rate, it is too early. What we need at the present are schools which can train people by August or September of this year to be basically familiar with the difference what types of artillery are used for this purpose.

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It is intended to make the lowest 25 percent of the students noncoms, the next highest 50 to 60 percent, platoon leaders teaching use of weapons, and the best, about 10 percent, company commanders and deputies.

With this I should like to close, so that you can turn to your individual work.

2. In a discussion following a lecture given by Oberrat Reinhold of the HV, in charge of financial affairs, Generalinspekteur Zaisser made the following observations:

(1) Hardly anyone among those present appears to be conscious of the fact that all budgets have become laws. All violations of budget provision should thus be seen in the light of criminal affairs and not as mere errors. To spend money in excess of the budget is criminal and the same applies to expenditures made for reasons other than the one authorized. Funds unspent at the end of the year should under no circumstances be held over into the New Year under the guise of back accounts. All these are matters of law.

(2) The new budget provides for material salary reductions if you compare it with top salaries heretofore. There existed for the Volkspolizei a special pay scale. Salaries had not been fixed in a budget agreement but in a special order that is still valid and which, as far as basic principles are concerned, will remain in force.

(3) Although there has been a shift of pay groups toward a lower scale, we should draw consolation from the fact that the circle of individuals entitled to payment of expense money has been expanded. These payments, amounting to approximately 400 Westmark (sic) per month, are tax free. For the time being you will continue paying salaries to category 3 and up on the former pay scale until the new regulations have been issued.

(4) When an Inspekteur T/O position is filled with a Kommandeur, and when under the new T/O this position rates a Chefinspekteur, this fact does not entitle the Kommandeur to demand a Chefinspekteur's pay. The pay he draws rather depends on his performance. As soon as it can be determined that he is up to our requirements, he is eligible for promotion. To link the T/O automatically with the payroll is wrong, it is a crime.

(5) We shall gradually come to the point where he who caused unlawful expenditures to be made will also be held accountable for them. He may pay for them out of his own pocket.

(6) I wish to draw your attention to the seriousness of our financial situation. Although up till now it has not been necessary to float any loans, it may become necessary during this year to borrow money internally.

Our pay scale should be based on the following performance grading:

65% Base scale
25% First scale
10% Second scale

3. Commenting on the remark made by an official to the effect that "we are Party members first and foremost," "our work is of a political nature," etc., and that too much paper work was unnecessarily adding to the amount of work, Zaisser made the following observations:

(1) One should debate properly and not use catch phrases. Party members are no angels either. Each instructor, beginning with the school commander, is at the same time a student. Next to the task of teaching stands the task of learning. We must be sure that what the instructors are teaching their students is actually correct.

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(2) Looking at it from your point of view, you are correct in stating that Berlin is flooding you with paper work. This is a condition prevailing in our whole administrative apparatus. There is everywhere a flood of paper which should be stemmed. As soon as we are sure that all officers in charge of training (Lehr- und Ausbildungsleiter) are what they purport to be, that mistakes are no longer being made, we shall be able to dispense with sending you a training program. As yet we have got to give specific instruction to the individual. I am talking not only about your weaknesses, but also about ours. Too much is being written. Those are things that can only be fought systematically. The more stable our organization gets, the more the paper flood will recede.

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